

**TOWN OF STAMFORD**  
**BOARD OF ABATEMENT MEETING**  
**April 6, 2023**  
**(UNAPPROVED)**

PRESENT: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Michael G. Denault, Kurt Gamari, and  
Pamela Tworig.  
Justices of the Peace: Tyna Senecal, Debra Burchard, Marta Miller (by phone), and  
Natalie Yorke.  
Town Clerk/Treasurer: Lori Shepard.

VISITORS: Bruce Bensen.

Natalie Yorke called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The oath was administered to Bruce Bensen.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the minutes of February 2, 2023 as written. SECONDED by  
Deb Burchard. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

PRESENTATION OF REQUEST TO ABATE TAXES

Re: Parcel ID# 00TR27005R.000, Bruce Bensen, 146 Brookside Drive, Stamford

Natalie Yorke read the request for abatement of penalty and interest. Bruce Bensen stated that he is eighty years old and on a fixed income. The rising inflation as well as a significant increase in his adjustable rate mortgage payment have severely impacted his budget. He has cancer and other health issues which have increased his health care costs. He made a payment of \$1,400.00 by the November 2022 due date but the remaining balance of \$1,539.96 went delinquent. Bruce Bensen has requested assistance from the state and Lori Shepard advised that the Vermont Housing Finance Agency had requested a payoff figure of outstanding tax, penalty and interest on his behalf. Bruce Bensen does not know if they have approved his application or not. Several board members suggested starting a payment plan for future taxes and asking his bank to begin a tax escrow. His bank is not willing to modify the adjustable interest rate. Marta Miller offered to provide information for seniors and assistance he might qualify for. Natalie Yorke thanked Bruce Bensen for coming.

The board deliberated. They considered the reasons outlined in the Board of Abatement Handbook and whether this would fall under V.S.A. §1535(A)(3): taxes of persons who are unable to pay their taxes, interest, and collection fees. Mike Denault felt there was clearly a change in financial circumstances and Pam Tworig also felt the town should not profit off of people's hardship. Natalie Yorke felt he has made some bad financial decisions. Kurt Gamari doesn't want a situation where everyone in town says they can't afford it. The Vermont Housing Finance Authority paid the full outstanding balance of tax, penalty and interest for the last taxpayer who qualified. Lori Shepard suggested waiting to see if the state pays the balance on his behalf. Mike Denault felt the penalty and interest should be put on hold. If the state pays the balance in full, then Bruce Bensen is all set. If the state denies his application, then the board could abate the

penalty and interest and recommend a payment plan. Sally Bohl was not present to provide a penalty and interest figure.

MOTION by Natalie Yorke to exit deliberative session. SECONDED by Deb Burchard. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board ended deliberative session at 5:35 p.m.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to hold everything until the town receives a letter from the state or until April 30, 2023, whichever occurs first. If the state does not provide financial support, then the town will abate all penalty and interest. SECONDED by Tyna Senecal. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The board discussed the status of the Wylde taxes that recently came before the board for abatement. The taxes have not been paid, but Audie Wylde still has another month to pay them. There has been title work done at the town office so the sale of the Wylde house should be soon.

The board discussed dates to meet for the Board of Civil Authority voter checklist review and purge. The next Board of Civil Authority meeting was set for May 18, 2023.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Deb Burchard. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Lori A. Shepard  
Clerk, Board of Abatement

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